NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5545 FEBRUARY 23, 1978
BUI TUAN

SOUTHEAST ASIA: DRUG CONTROL PROGRESS REPORT

ANNCR:

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, EFFORTS TO CURB ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC HAVE PRODUCED SOME POSITIVE RESULTS....AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY VOA'S BUI TUAN.

VOICE:

FROM ALL EVIDENCE, MOST OF THE HEROIN THAT REACHES ADDICTS IN EUROPE COMES FROM THE SO-CALLED "GOLDEN TRIANGLE," A NO-MAN'S LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF THE BORDERS OF BURMA, THAILAND AND LAOS. IT'S ESTIMATED THAT OPIUM CULTIVATION IN THE "GOLDEN TRIANGLE" SUPPLIES SOME FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND ADDICTS IN THAILAND AND BURMA ALONE.

IN BURMA, MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND HECTARES OF POPPY WERE DESTROYED BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR. IN ADDITION, BURMA AND THAILAND HAVE CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT TO CARRY OUT A TWO-PRONGED CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE OPIUM PRODUCTION IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE. UNDER THE AGREEMENT, BURMESE AUTHORITIES WILL UNDERTAKE TO DESTROY POPPY FIELDS IN THE KOKAN AREA NORTH OF THAILAND. THEY WILL ALSO STEP UP EFFORTS TO INTERCEPT OPIUM CARAVANS BEFORE THEY REACH CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES IN THE BURMESE-THAI BORDER AREA. THAILAND, WHILE CONDUCTING SEARCH OPERATIONS TO LOCATE THE LABORATORIES, WILL WORK TO PREVENT THE FLOW OF ACETIC ANHYDRIDE FROM REACHING THE LABORATORIES. ACETIC ANHYDRIDE IS AN ESSENTIAL CHEMCIAL NEEDED IN HEROIN PRODUCTION.

ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, SINGAPORE POLICE AND NARCOTICS AGENTS HAVE LAUNCHED THE SECOND PHASE OF A DRUG DETECTION CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO INTERCEPT MORE ELUSIVE HEROIN ADDICTS AND TO PREVENT RECIDIVISM (LAPSING BACK INTO DRUG USE.) IN NEIGHBORING

MALAYSIA, MORE THAN FIVE THOUSAND SUSPECTED DRUG ADDICTS WERE ARRESTED OVER THE PAST YEAR.

FILIPINO AUTHORITIES REPORT THAT ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DRUG ADDICTS AND DRUG TRAFFICERS WERE APPREHENDED IN THE PHILIPPINES LAST YEAR. AT THE SAME TIME, MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF DRUGS WERE SEIZED IN THE PHILIPPINES. MEANWHILE, JAPAN HAS AGREED TO COOPERATE WITH THE PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT IN AN EFFORT TO CLOSE DOWN A REPORTED JAPANESE DRUG RING WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A SMUGGLING ROUTE FROM TAIWAN TO JAPAN THROUGH THE PHILIPPINES.

THE UNITED STATES IS ASSISTING IN EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE FLOW OF ILLICIT DRUGS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. SOME THIRTY U.S. NARCOTIC AGENTS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THAI AUTHORITIES. ROBERT OAKLEY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, TOLD A GROUP OF NARCOTICS EXPERTS IN SINGAPORE LAST MONTH THAT THE UNITED STATES IS WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH ANY GOVERNMENT IN ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES, WHETHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. BUT PROGRESS IN COMBATTING THE DRUG PROBLEM, HE OBSERVED, REQUIRES ENORMOUS EFFORT, GREAT EXPENSE AND MUCH TIME.

-0-

JS/RTD